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ANTI-ART PRODUCTIONS MANIFESTO I (MAY 1996)

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Mission Statement

Anti-Art exists to be a universal multi-sensorial human language, open for all humans, giving us the freedom to penetrate and destroy habitual patterns and perceptions taught and used in modern society; a bridging of the gap between our inherited tribal element and the cerebral cyber element by utilizing the rhythms of the body, machine, information flow and recognizing the past as a means to devise tools for the present which enables us to project forward into the future.

“Anti-Art: In search of Dada reality”

Western society today is becoming more and more obsessed with simulations of different kinds. Some people refer to this as “hyperreality”. We watch television, listen to the radio, sit

in front of computers, communicate via the Internet and talk on cellular phones. All these activities are played in a field which is not real, but we accept it without much questioning. For example, talking on a cellular phone seems very real, but it is really the sampling and filtering of your speech, sending the data packets, then reconstructing and refiltering this data, so that it again appears real, but in actuality, it's not your real voice. What if somebody would intercept and change these packets? Would the listener notice?

Our world has become very fragmented, specialized and superficial. The information feed into our senses is very high, but there remains the question of it's contents, meaning, depth and quality. It seems that people have become very attached to words in a literal sense. Words have been set as the equivalent to reality and as a result, there is less room for play and experiment which we can refer to as the joy of creativity. Economics, immediate results and practical usefulness have become the ways of measuring value in our modern culture. Our childhood and school lessons teach us words and patterns which we are expected to adopt and use in our everyday lives, but do we really think for ourselves any longer?

Is the world really the same as the society which populates it? People spend enormous amounts of energy worrying about their possessions and roles in society, but is that all there is?

Isn't this rather, a lack of reality or a void? Perhaps a symptom of something missing, something which is more substantial and eternal? It could be argued that religion filled this space before, but it is useless in today's age.

People seem to have forgotten how to "breath" using only their senses. They can no longer perceive or sense without thought processes or analyses, unlike Zen followers, who have a meditation technique called "Zazen". The purpose of "Zazen" is to learn how to perceive reality directly, to cut out the stream of consciousness and worries about yesterday and the future. In order to really perceive, one must take in the NOW, not the then or the later. One must feel connected and aware of the reality being present. A tree is not just an abstract entity to be analyzed and discussed in the Zen mind as it is in the mainstream Western mind.

The cognitive side of human behavior is much more appreciated and encouraged in our world. To talk, to analyze, to use logical reasoning etc. which removes or postpones the flow of time and takes away the awareness. One becomes a problem-solver, seeing life itself as a set of problems to solve. The only data used is old memories and future beliefs.

The duality between good and evil has become a reality in itself. But good and evil are just language constructs. Life is an interconnection, an intertwining of good and evil. We must unlearn this old-fashioned duality.

Another pattern is the reaction to as opposed to the action on the sensory input. We like to know what others think of us and what their valuations are. Our confidence becomes an external matter. We become vulnerable in far too high of a degree.

We exist within boundaries which are predefined by our senses. Our senses are just that however; that which we interpret based upon our bodies reactions to external stimuli. A light shines in our face and we hold a hand up to cover. A cold blast of winds moves into the places we live and we take shelter with a warm coat. However, these are just the body's interpretation of the "facts". Different bodies have differing tolerances to these stimuli. There are no absolutes. Our minds, which formulate our cultural aspects, behave in the same manner. Liberals, conservatives, the religious, the atheistic…all are examples of groups of people who interpret "reality". The cultural stimulus is the same, however, it is the interpretation of these stimuli which drives our reactions to them. In a humanistic sense, there are no realities and truths. There are only manipulations of the input in our collective societal minds.

By recognizing this dilemma we propose to formulate alternative realities which of course, may not necessarily be closer to the "truth" (if indeed, such a thing exists) but at the very least it is a beacon to indicate that there indeed need be the questioning of what we consider to be fact, truth, morality, etc. We, in Western Society, who are more or less privileged enough to have our basic needs of life fulfilled must begin a search into an alternative world which we may perhaps call the "dada reality", in order to mark the difference more clearly. Perhaps

it does not exist but we must not allow ourselves the luxury to feel certain that it does not.
Dada reality is the field of deep human and universal unity, with a clear light shining through. It is not an argument against hyperreality so much as it is the recognition of something more, something larger, both inside and outside of the boundaries of hyperreality.
We believe that art is the most suitable human mechanism for conducting this search into dada reality. We must assemble around something which is concrete; a framework or structure to build off of. This place is called Anti-Art. Anti-Art is the locus and starting-point. It is our way of documenting and inspiring the search.
Anti-Art wishes to deconstruct and rebuild that which society accepts and grab said society by the throat and force it to look into a prism which refracts alternatives. Yes, it is true that Anti-Art is still forced to utilize the same sensorial tools, but the crucial difference lies in Anti-Art's ability to perceive that the tools need to be constantly challenged and forced into new parameters of perception.

What is Anti-Art?

I (Robert Dada) founded Anti-Art Productions (then known as Anti-Art Studios)
in 1990, initially as an independent personal artistic endeavor, as an outlet, a forum, which seeks to expose what I feel to be the truth which lies underneath the complacent, mediocre facade of the contemporary human condition. It existed as a collective of my artistic work under one umbrella. Over the past six years, I have embarked upon a creative journey within my mind, body and soul which has carried me into various artistic media. Currently Anti-Art Productions contains my music and sound collages, paper and computer designed visual collages, digital paintings and various written works. My work can best bedescribed as an exploration of my psyche and my observations of the world around me, be they of a sensorial, emotional, social and/or political nature.
My direct artistic influences are the Dada and Surrealist movements though I must state that my work is not exclusively

confined to those realms. Rather, those movements act as points of departure for what I wish to explore.
After I gathered a large enough body of work, I created an Internet World Wide Web Site in the summer of 1995 (renaming my endeavor Anti-Art Productions) to unleash my work upon the masses. My goal was/is to entertain and educate interested parties with my thoughts and/or incur the scorn of those who would choose to disagree either artistically and/or philosophically with my viewpoints. An equally important goal though, became the desire and need to gather like minds and form a collective of free artistic thought. Therefore, Anti-Art sought out and now also features the works of others who share similar viewpoints who rally under the banner, “All freedom in art.”

Why does Anti-Art exist?

Art has ceased to be a major challenging force on the masses in general. It doesn’t grab the populace en masse and give it a sound thrashing. It has largely withered back into the banal existence of art for the sake of aesthetics. Most of today’s “popular” music, film, visual art, literature is nothing more than sensorial candy which satisfies only a superficial whimsical need in the masses. Strong messages are largely absent, especially those of a subversive, esoteric or confrontational nature. Every now and then, something will come along which, on the surface, appears to convey something challenging and meaningful but more often than not, it is just a promotional gimmick utilized to satisfy a profit incentive from a group who cares little or not at all about any meaningful message to the public. It is nothing more than a bastardization of real art. I will not disagree with the assertion that valid, hard hitting art exists and is displayed in galleries, theaters, etc., which seek to make a difference. However, it is my observation that this art is being largely ignored by the general public, who would much rather view landscapes and still lifes as opposed to “thought and emotion” committed to symbolic form, if they even take in any art at all.
The pendulum has swung back hard to the rise of the right wing ultraconservative faux puritanical moralistic society. Living

in the United States, this is beyond being blatantly apparent. The government is increasingly invading the havens of free thought and dissent and seeks to control it, all under the guise of concern for the welfare of successive generations. This is rubbish! It is once again, back to the days of the protection of the bourgeois and their desire to accumulate more wealth and power and maintain their security and control of it. The Western countries are showing signs of economic fatigue and the ruling and controlling elitist elements are declaring war on the middle and lower classes with their “slash and burn” raping of society for their own avaricious concerns. The last thing they want is for the masses to educate and enlighten themselves, for education is power. Therefore, they have also declared war on the world of art, in all of its forms, which offers a message of dissent. Music, film, painting, literature…all of it is coming under fire from the ruling elitists, who deem it obscene and immoral and a violation against humanity.

Anti-Art represents an attempt by the common man to fight back and awaken the populace who are willing to listen. Anti-Art does not hesitate to commit to form, a thought which may be unpleasant to the world. The world is draped in evil and ugliness and hiding from it behind “pretty impressionism” etc., will not eradicate it. Rather, it will more firmly root itself into the fabric of our very existence. The only way to exterminate the ugliness is to meet it head on and on its very terms. Pure and total confrontation with the purpose of exposing it for all to see. Anti-Art is truth; truth which can be dark and unpleasant. Anti-Art is a reflection of the real world, a scream in the wind of indifference. Anti-Art seeks out its own kind for there is strength in the unity of a collective artistic spirit.

How does Anti-Art propose to promote its message?

The Internet is the ideal home for Anti-Art for this medium provides access to people all over the globe, people who, under other circumstances, would never be able to effectively communicate with the outside world. It is a cost effective

medium which allows anti-artists to “meet and discuss” their thoughts and their works and offers a multimedia forum for exhibition. The Internet is for Anti-Art, a calling card, an invitation, to other anti-artists. The Internet provides the possibility to unite pre-existing anti-art “satellites” and link them together. It is artistic symbiosis. It brings together, creative talents who then can not only continue to focus on their own individual endeavors but also work in collaborative efforts. It offers each anti-artist, the ability to learn from each other and grow at a rate which could never be achieved on an individual basis. All forms of art can be adequately presented through the Internet. Virtual museums and libraries can be built which feature our efforts. Currently, the Anti-Art Internet web site features sound, visual and literary art from a wide variety of artists. Anti-Art is also linked to other web sites of an anti-art nature and vice versa, providing the means to attract greater and greater numbers of patrons and collaborators (or, dare I say, co-conspirators?).

Currently, each Anti-Artist is expanding their body of work on an individual basis. In addition, there have been numerous discussions amongst them to begin engaging in collaborative efforts, some of which are currently underway. Anti-Art has taken on a life of its own and we Anti-Artists are becoming its appendages and organs – its life blood. We direct it to an extent but it also directs us and forces us to go down uncharted paths, pushing us further into the depths of anti-art. As such, it is a school of thought for each anti-artist in addition to being an artistic enlightenment vehicle for humanity.

Contact

Anti-Art Productions can be reached via United States mail at the following address:

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In addition, the following Anti-Artists can be reached via Internet email.

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